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1. INCREASE OF THE POPULATION[1]

In Japan, even in ancient times, there was an institution for registering the names of members of families (*Koseki*). In the Taiho-Ryo (i. e. the code amended during the year of Taiho—702 A.D.) that institution was placed under more exact regulations. Nevertheless, we cannot learn precisely the exact number of people at that time. In modern times, *viz.*, the Tokugawa age, the number of people before the Kyoho period likewise remains unascertained.

The order to reckon up the population was given by Yoshimune, the 8th Shogun of the Tokugawa dynasty. The two edicts, which were issued in the 6th year (1721) and in the 2nd month of the 11th year of Kyoho (1726), are of the utmost importance with reference to the problem.

In the earlier decree, there was no order to examine the population and to report the number obtained from this examination. The number reported was only the registered number, which was already known to the officers at that time. But in the later decree, an examination and an actual counting of the people were evidently ordered. Therefore, the former must be the first instance where merely *the registered number was reported*, and the latter the first instance where *the actual number was ascertained*. We can easily understand that the figures obtained in the 11th year were more likely to be exact than those of the

[1] Cf. "The Population of Japan in the Tokugawa Era" in the English supplement of my work entitled "*The Regulation of the Price of Rice under the Tokugawa Régime*" (徳川幕府の米價調節) in Japanese 1924.

6th year; therefore, as our basis, we must take the latter one.

The reckoning of the number of the people was carried out every sixth year after the 11th year of Kyoto.

The following table gives the figures for the population practically every 6th year from A.D. 1721 to 1846:—

Year	A.D.	Males	Females	Total	Index Number
Kyoho 6	1721	—	—	26,065,425	98.17
„ 11	1726	—	—	26,548,998	100.00
„ 17	1732	14,407,107	12,514,709	26,921,816	101.02
Enkyo 1	1744	—	—	26,153,450	98.51
Kan-en 3	1750	13,818.654	12,099,176	25,917,830	97.24
Horyaku 6	1756	13,833,311	12,228,919	26,061,830	98.16
„ 12	1762	13,785,400	12,136,058	25,921,458	97.25
Meiwa 5	1768	—	—	26,252,057	98.88
An-ei 3	1774	—	—	25,990,451	97.51
„ 9	1780	—	—	26,010,600	97.57
Temmei 6	1786	—	—	25,086,466	94.49
Kansei 4	1792	—	—	24,891,441	93.71
„ 10	1798	—	—	25,471,033	95.93
Bunka 1	1804	—	—	25,517,729	96.11
„ 13	1816	13,427,249	12,194,708	25,621,957	96.50
Bunsei 11	1828	14,160,736	13,040,064	27,201,400	102.45
Tempo 5	1834	—	—	27,063,907	101.93
Koka 3	1846	13,854,043	13,053,582	26,907,625	101.35

But these figures do not include the number of the court nobles, the Samurai, their subordinates, Eta, Hinin, and those outside the register of domiciles. Sometimes the populations of Ezo and the Loochoo Islands were also omitted and those below fifteen years of age were calculated or omitted at the option of each Daimyo. Of course the method of examination was inexact. There would be a great deal of omission and duplication. I think it very likely that the actual number of the population would exceed the figures given. If so what number must be added to the total? Many learned men have endeavoured to give the closest approximation to the total population of Japan in those days. There is, however, no method of correcting the omissions and duplications which occurred through the

defectiveness of the process of reckoning. Therefore at the present time it is surely impossible to estimate the exact number of that distant period. We must content ourselves with round figures from the theories which already prevailed. I daresay that we should add two or three millions to the calculated number, that is to say, the population in the latter half of the Tokugawa period was perhaps in round figures, from 28,000,000 to 30,000,000.

What was the rate of increase and decrease? If we take the number in the 11th year of Kyoho as the standard number, only in four examined years do we find an increase of population:—*viz.*, the 17th year of Kyoho (1732), the 11th year of Bunsei (1828), the 5th year of Tempo (1834) and the 3rd year of Koka (1846). Now, if we take the number in the 11th year of Bunsei, which showed the largest total of the period, and compare it with that of the 11th year of Kyoho, we find an increase of only 652,402 persons in 102 years, so the ratio of increase was only 0.24‰ in a year. Bearing this rate of increase in mind we may say generally that the population at the time was almost stationary, not showing a rapid increase as at present.

As already mentioned, in the latter half of the period, the population was almost stationary. Then, what are the circumstances in the former half? We can not know the number of the whole people in that half, because no capitation had been made at that time.

Shogun Yoshimune, taking much interest in the increase of the people after the report of the number in the 6th year of Kyoho, for purposes of comparison, ordered the ten great lords, whose fiefs gained more than 100,000 Koku a year, and had not changed their domains for over 80 years, to submit reports on the number of people in their dominions 70 or 80 years before. These reports were sent in by nine lords and are summed up as follows:—

By this table we can see that only in one case was the population diminished. In all other cases, the number had increased. The ratio of increase however is very different

Daimyo	Fief and Annual Yield	Year of Examination	Age Examined	Population	Increase X-Decrease	Ratio of increase in a year ‰
Matsudaira Kaga no Kami (Maeda)	Kaga, Etchū, Noto and Ohmi More than 1,020,000 Koku	Kyoho 5 (1720)	Over 15	551,754		
		„ 17 (1732)	„ „	576,734	24,980 in 12 years	3.77
Matsudaira Mutsu no Kami (Date)	Mutsu, Hidachi, Shimôsa and Ohmi More than 620,000 Koku	Genroku 3 (1690)	Over 1	599,241		
		„ 15 (1702)	„ „	617,323	18,082 in 12 years	2.51
		Kyoho 17 (1732)	„ „	647,427	30,104 „ 30 „	1.62
Matsudaira Ohsumi no Kami (Shimazu)	Ohsumi, Satsuma & Hyuga More than 600,000 Koku	Genroku 2 (1698)	Over 1	260,961		
		Kyoho 17 (1732)	„ „	339,955	78,994 in 34 years	15.66
Matsukaira Oki no Kami (Ikeda)	Bizen, Bitchû More than 340,000 Koku	Jokyo 3 (1686)	Over 2	185,043		
		Hoei 3 (1706)	„ „	207,215	22,172 in 20 years	5.34
		Kyoho 17 (1732)	„ „	223,959	16,740 in 26 „	2.87
Todo Daigaku no Kami	Iga, Ise, Yamashiro, Yamato & Shimôsa More than 320,000 Koku	Kammon 5 (1665)	Over 1	252,061		
		Genroku 3 (1690)	„ „	284,126	32,065 in 25 years	4.52
		Kyoho 17 (1732)	„ „	287,242	3,116 „ 42 „	0.26
Matsudaira Awaji no Kami (Hachisuga)	Awaji and Awa More than 250,000 Koku	Kammon 5 (1665)	Over 2	308,880		
		Genroku 1 (1688)	„ „	385,751	76,863 in 23 years	10.82
		Kyoho 17 (1732)	„ „	470,512	84,761 „ 44 „	4.98
Sakai Saemon no Jo	Dewa More than 140,000 Koku	Genroku 7 (1694)	Over 1	126,383		
		Kyoho 17 (1732)	„ „	131,164	4,781 in 38 years	0.97
Niwa Sakyo Taifu	Mutsu More than 100,000 Koku	Jokyo 11 (1685)	Over 1	73,351		
		Genroku 15 (1702)	„ „	76,130	2,779 in 17 years	2.14
		Kyoho 17 (1732)	„ „	70,614	X-5,516 in 30 years	—
Nambu Shuri Taifu	Mutsu More than 100,000 Koku	Kammon 9 (1669)	Over 1	245,635		
		Genroku 16 (1703)	„ „	306,142	60,507 in 34 years	5.81
		Kyoho 17 (1732)	„ „	322,109	15,967 „ 29 „	1.70

and we can not infer the whole population of Japan at that time from these few cases, but if we set aside the actual number given above and dwell upon the marked tendency, we dare say that in the former half of the period the ratio of increase was greater than in the latter half, and also that in these examples of the nine lords, the ratio in the earlier period was greater than in the latter.

From these observations, I think it is not unreasonable to state that the population in the former half of the Tokugawa period probably increased fairly rapidly.

We may therefore conclude that, though the population in the latter half was almost stationary, in the former half it showed a fair increase.

We admit the existence of such a difference. Therefore as a matter of course, we must investigate the reason why such a difference occurred. The period of the Tokugawa régime was distinguished for its peaceful character. For several hundred years previously, Japan had been the theatre of civil wars and tumults. In such an age, horrible warfare raged and swayed hither and thither. Blood ran in streams and corpses lay in heaps. Thousands of the strongest and most efficient men went to battle, setting their lives at naught for the sake of loyalty to their lords. Not only the surplus population, but even the necessary and effective members of the nation were killed off either directly or indirectly by wars. At such periods we can never expect any marked increase in the population.

But the Tokugawa regime, after this time of war, took hold with the strong hand, and restored the whole land to order, and peace reigned for about two and a half centuries, a matter of rare occurrence in the history of the world. War became then scarcely more than a memory, and armour, weapons and military organizations were retained only by means of an elaborate etiquette. At such a time, the people were well content, since their days were filled with peace and they had ample leisure to cultivate the industrial and other arts, and to develop the wealth of the country. We

cannot, therfore, be surprised at the increase of the population under such circumstances. This is the reason why the increase was fairly rapid in the former half of the Tokugawa regime. Of course this is not the only example of such an increase in the world. There are many such examples of populations increasing rapidly in peace-time after wars, and many scholars also have recognized this fact.[1]

The development of industry and the increase of population mentioned above, could not make further progress after attaining a certain limit. Why?

At home, after enjoying an excess of the blessings of peace, several evils made their appearance: ease and absence of progress in general characterised society, people lived in idleness and luxury, the agricultural districts were in an exhausted condition, commerce and industry, in which many guilds were organized, relied too much upon their privileges: therefore there was not enough competition, no endeavour to progress, and in particular no great manufacturing industry to absorb many workers. In such conditions life was difficult.

As regards international relations, our country was almost wholly closed to foreigners from the reign of the 3rd Shogun Iemitsu. The few Dutch and Chinese, who engaged in trade, were strictly confined to particular places. No outlet existed in the shape of foreign emigration for the increase of population. No foreign trade was permitted to give scope to new forms of industry, or to stimulate activities for which the country had peculiar advantages. Cut off from all foreign intercourse, Japan did not even suspect the existence of a more progressive civilization.

These conditions at home and abroad, kept the population from increasing beyond a certain limit.

In addition to this general tendency, famines, epidemics

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[1] Mayo-Smith, Statistics and Sociology, 1910, p. 73. Droppers, The population of Japan in the Tokugawa Period, (Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, vol. 22., p. 262.)

and other visitations were frequently reported from several quarters of the country. A great many lives were lost by these calamities. The heavy burden of taxation, the influence of exaggerated ideas of thrift and diligence, and the struggle for life: all this made the people shrink from an increase of population. Moreover, the frightful practices of abortion and childmurder were almost universal. These so called preventive and positive checks interrupted the increase of the population, and these are the reasons why the population did not increase in the latter half of that period.

Of course, we must admit that even in the former half of the period there were famines, epidemics, natural calamities and the practice of abortion and childmurder. But the influence of these checks upon the population is very different in a society which has a tendency to increase rapidly and in another where it is already impossible to feed more than a certain number of people.

The abhorrent practices of abortions and child-murder infected the whole land in consequence of the fiercer struggle for existence in the latter period; and the three great famines of that time occurred also in the latter half. We may venture to say that these catastrophes and customs severely checked the increase of population in the latter half of that period.

Some words must be added here about famines. The influence of a famine has more effect on the increase of population than that of the other checks already mentioned. In the lean years, there is not only the heavy death-rate which is directly accounted for by starvation and the plague due to it, that is, after a famine, the economic circumstances of the people become worse, the strength of the human body is exhausted, goods and resources run low. The people can not recover their former life. Therefore the rate of increase in the population is very slow.

Let us compare famines with epidemics. The influence of the latter is only temporary. After the epidemic is stamped out, on the one hand many strong people survive,

and on the other, materials are more abandant than before, being inversely proportional to the decrease of the population. Owing to the scarcity of labour, wages rise. Generally the economic condition becomes good. The population recovers very quickly. But in the case of famine, the circumstances are different. There is not only a heavy death-rate but famine also exerts a permanent weakening influence upon the poppulation.

These are not theories merely, but in the actual number of the people of the Tokugawa period, we can distinguish these facts clearly. For example, the number of the population in the 6th year of Temmei (1786) was 920,000 less than that of the 9th year of An-ei (1780), and the number in the 4th year of Kansei (1792) was less by 200,000 in comparison with that of the 6th year of Temmei (1786). In these two cases the decrease amounted to about 1,100,000. This marked decrease was due to the great famine from the 3rd to the 7th year of Temmei. (1783–87). In the 10th year of Kansei (1798) the number of the population exceeded that of the 6th year of Temmei (1786), but was less than that of the 9th year of An-ei (1780). The decrease in the 1st year of Enkyo (1744) was due to the famine of the 17th and 18th years of Kyoho (1732–33) in the western provinces. The number of the 3rd year of Koka (1846) was less than that of the 6th year of Tempo (1834). This shows that the diminished population had not yet recovered from the famine of the 7th and 8th years of Tempo (1836–37).

From what has been already said, it will be seen how terrible is the influence of famine, directly and indirectly, on the population. The effects of famine in diminishing and weakening the population were greater than those of epidemics and of all other so-called positive checks combined.

The above observations are in regard to fluctuations in the population of Japan, as a whole, and it must be noted that somewhat different circumstances obtained in respect of different provinces and districts. In some provinces, an increase was recorded even after the Kyoho era (see Note 1).

This increase was due not only to the general causes already described but, in no small measure, to the movements of the people from one district to another. As for those migrators or seasonal labourers (see Note 2), who made periodical visits to other places in quest of work, they did not affect the sum total of the population of any particular district, but with regard to those who left their native provinces for good in order to settle down in other provinces, their migrations, needless to say, reduced the population of their native provinces. These deserters mustered in prosperous cities such as Edo (now Tokyo), Kyoto and Osaka, where they worked either as day labourers or as servants. The abandonment of the plough by these people led to the impoverishment of agricultural villages; while, on the other hand, the population of big cities—Edo in particular—witnessed an enormous increase by their influx, as was pointed out by many scholars at the time.

Note 1. In April of the ninth year of Tempo (1838), the *kanjo bugyo* (a magistrate in the days of the Tokugawa Shogunate), acting under instructions from Lord Midzuno Echizen-no-kami, addressed inquiries to the *gundai* and *daikwan* as to the increases or decreases of the populations within their respective jurisdictions. The reports submitted by these officials in reply to these inquiries throw some light on fluctuations in the number of inhabitants in various districts. I quote below a few reports out of many:—

(a) Teranishi Kurata, the *gundai* of the Saikoku district, reported that in the district under his jurisdiction, namely, Buzen, Bungo, Hyuga and Chikuzen provinces, where rice was produced to the quantity of 117,000 odd koku, there was an increase exceeding 8,400 in the population as compared with that of the first year of Kwansei (1789).

(b) Soyeda Ichiroji, a *daikwan*, reported that the region under his jurisdiction, consisting of 194 villages of Settsu, Kawachi and Harima provinces, where the production of rice exceeded 67,200 koku, there was a decrease of a little more than 70 a year on an average during the ten years between the ninth year of Bunsei (1826) and the sixth year of Tempo (1835). In 108 villages of Oshu and Hidachi provinces, where rice was produced exceeding 58,600 koku per annum, there was a decrease of some 310 persons a year on an average during the ten years between the fifth year of Bunsei (1822) and the second year of Tempo (1831). In 91 villages of Dewa province with a rice yield of 69,900 koku, a yearly decrease of 230 on an average was recorded during the ten years between the eleventh year of Bunsei (1828) and the eighth year of Tempo (1837).

(c) Oi Tatewaki, the *gundai* of Hida province, reported that in his province there had occurred an increase of some eight or nine thousand in population as compared with the Kyoho era (1716–1735). In Echizen and Mino provinces, however, there was a marked decrease in population as compared with the Kyoho era.

(d) Matsuzaka Saburozaemon, a *daikwan*, reported that in Echigo province which was a fief of 56,000 koku of rice, and over which he had jurisdiction, there was a decrease of more than 600 in population during the ten years between the eleventh year of Bunsei (1828) and the eighth year of Tempo (1837), but that there was no tract of land which was allowed to go waste because of a shortage of farm hands.

(e) Kobayashi Tonosuke, a *daikwan*, who had two hundred villages of Yashiro and Koma districts of Kai province under his jurisdiction, a fief of 56,600 koku of rice, said in his report that the houses in these villages totalled some 19,100 with a population of 87,600 in the eighth year of Tempo (1837), which showed an increase of about 2,900 in the number of houses and of 11,700 in population.

(f) Nomura Hikoemon, a *daikwan*, in his report said that there had been a gradual decrease in population in Shimozuke, Hidachi, Shimôsa and Mutsu provinces.

Note 2. In the case of seasonal labourers who migrated from Echigo and Shinano to Edo and other cities, and from Tango and Tajima to Kyoto and Osaka, they usually left their villages in October and returned home in March of the following year. This migration was due to the lack of occupation at home in winter. If some of these seasonal labourers remained in the cities whither they had gone in quest of temporary work, it was because they found life in such cities much easier, and not because they had any positive reasons for the desertion of their native villages.

2. THE RUSH OF PEOPLE INTO BIG CITIES

The population of Japan in the Tokugawa regime was in the state as already described, and in those days the rush of people into big cities and birth control formed two most important phases of the population problem.

Let me, first, deal with the concentration of people in urban districts. Some farmers in those days abandoned the plough and went to big cities, where they became either tradesmen or day labourers. This naturally led to an increase in the population of these cities. The farmers of those days were treated as though they were machines for pro-

ducing taxes, and their lot was a very hard one.[1] It was quite natural that there should have been a big influx of people into towns when farmers, who were leading a miserable life, found life in towns free and easy. The fact is generally admitted that the expansion of big cities—Edo in particular—was due largely to the influx of the people of other regions into them. As far back as the Kyoho era (1716–1735), town life was in a state of good development. Ogiu-Sorai, a famous scholar, in one of his books, says:— "There has been a daily increase in the number of peasants, who, after coming to Edo to find temporary work as servants, decide to settle down permanently here either as day labourers or as hawkers, with the result that the city has expanded to the extent of five *ri* (12.5 miles) with a great density of houses." In a memorial submitted to the authorities in the seventh year of Tenmei (1787), Uezaki-Kuhachiro said:— "There has lately been a tendency among the farmers to show indifference to their agricultural pursuits and contract luxurious habits. In the case of farmers in easy circumstances, they leave the tillage of the soil to their servants, wear fine clothes and indulge in citified pleasures and amusements. When once they visit Edo, they become dazzled by the bustle and splendour of the metropolis and their mode of life becomes more and more depraved. Many small farmers also regard farm work as drudgery and develop an inclination to leave their villages. So far as girls are concerned, their parents send them out to domestic service in Edo, in order to satisfy their wish to see Edo and the life there. At first, these girls sigh for their homes and tearfully regret that they had ever been engaged to work in a strange city, but they soon come to imitate the manners of the Edo people and to detest life in their own native provinces. The example find many followers and all vie with one another in despatching their

[1] See my essay "The Agrarian Problem in the Tokugawa Régime" in Vol. 1, No. 2 of this Economic Review.

daughters to Edo. Thus, there is a steady increase in the number of people who prefer life in Edo to that in their native provinces. The result is that farm work is largely abandoned and the supply of rice falls off. As no restrictions are put on the free emigration of people to Edo, the city finally be turned into a reservoir of the population from all parts of the country. Although it may appear at first sight that the prosperity of the city increases with the increase of its population, serious consequences may gradually arise because of the abandonment of agriculture, the mainstay of the country, by many people in favour of pursuits of lesser importance (commerce and industry were in those days regarded as of secondary importance), as the rice fields run waste and the roads in the provinces fall into disrepair." In the *Seji Kemmonroku* (Observations on Worldly Affairs), a book written in the 13th year of the Bunkwa era (1816) also, the eagerness with which people sought city life is described at length, and the writer makes the remark:— "In the provinces, the population falls off, but hardships remain; while in the prosperous cities, new hardships are created by the increase of their inhabitants."

What measures, then, did the Shogunate adopt to meet this concentration of people in urban districts? In the days prior to the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate, restrictions were often set on the freedom of movement on the part of farmers, and these restrictions were enforced more rigidly in the Tokugawa Shogunate. Under that regime, all feudal lords jealously kept their fiefs and with a view to maintaining their military strength on an efficient basis, to keeping the conditions prevailing in their own fiefs from being made known to those outside their fiefs, to preserving peace and order within their own feudal domains or to increasing tax revenues, ruthless restrictions were put on the outgoings of *samurai*, farmers and tradesmen, and on the incoming of deserters, *rônin* (lordless *samurai*) and questionable characters. In August of the 20th year of Kwanyei (1643), the Shogunate issued orders to all villages that those

who came on the parish by neglecting their farm work or those farmers who left their native places to settle down elsewhere should receive condign punishment. Notwithstanding this, there was a remarkable increase, from the middle period of the Shogunate and downwards, in the number of people who, abandoning the plough, went to live in cities, resulting, as before, in the decrease of the population of the provinces and in the waste of arable land. This state of things excited much comment and discussion among the scholars of the day. In May of the sixth year of Anyei (1777), further restrictions were enforced on the number of people going out of their own provinces in search of work and service, and on the period of their service in other provinces. Shortly afterwards, the disastrous famine of the Temmei era overtook Japan, and there was a marked decrease in the population of Mutsu, Hidachi and Shimodzuke provinces. This led to prohibitory orders being issued in these provinces in December of the eighth year of Temmei (1788) against the outgoing of inhabitants in quest of work, permission being given only in cases where their going out to Edo did not cause a decrease in the population of their villages or where it did not interfere with farm work. In such cases, they had to get written certificates from the *daikwan* or *jito*. Not only was the outflow of people prohibited in this way but the return of migrators to their agricultural pursuits was encouraged. In the second year of Kwansei (1790), the policy was framed for encouraging the general return of local people working in Edo again to take up farm work in their native places. This policy was not, however, very successful, as can be inferred from an order issued in April of the ninth year of Tempo (1838) in which it was mentioned that the earnest endeavours made by the Shogunate at heavy cost since the Kwansei era to encourage the return of provincial people working in Edo to the agronomy of their earlier days could not arrest the decrease of the population in the provinces near Edo, where

the areas of waste lands increased, while the population of Edo was steadily on the increase.

The above-mentioned policy of encouraging the return of those who had once evaded the strenuous life on a farm to take up again their pristine existence was chiefly prompted by apprehension lest the farm villages should be impoverished by the desertion of farm work by many people. In the reform of the Tempo era, which was carried out by Midzuno Echizen-no-Kami, who modelled after the administration of the Kwansei era by Shirakawa Rakuo, however, a similar policy framed and pursued by him had another object in view, namely, to reduce the population of Edo. The Order, issued in March of the 14th year of Tempo (1843), prohibited the migration of provincial people to Edo. Even those who were actually in Edo at the time this Order was issued were forced to return to their respective homes, except those who had been carrying on their trades in that city for many years and had their families and relatives to support. As to those farmers who went to Edo in quest of temporary employment, they were allowed to stay there only for a limited period, and on the expiry of this term they were compelled to return to their village work in their respective localities. A strict control was also exercised over those, such as Buddhist or Shinto priests, fortune-tellers, pilgrims, etc., who travelled from province to province. By these means the authorities tried to check any diminution in the population of farm villages, by way of encouraging agriculture, but their policy was evidently a failure, though it had the effect of reducing the number of migrators for a time. The following figures show that although there was some decrease in the number of migrators to Edo, there was practically no decrease in the population of Edo:—

	Apr., 1842	July, 1843	Sept., 1843	Apr., 1844
Total of the townspeople in the quarters under the jurisdiction of city officials and those in the precincts of temples and shrines.	551,063	553,257	547,952	559,497
Migrators.	—	34,201	29,745	24,092

In short, the policy followed by the Shogunate for checking the concentration of people in cities, which was negative at first, assumed a positive character in the end. At first, it confined itself to affording facilities to those who desired to return to their native provinces, but afterwards, or, to be more exact, in the 14th year of Tempo (1843), it adopted the positive policy of forcing the return of migrators to their respective homes, enforcing rigorous measures of control in other directions also. Neither policy yielded the desired result, however. In the *Tamakushige-Beppon*, written by Motoori-Norinaga, the author rightly remarks:— "In all villages there has been a gradual decrease in the number of households, the fields have been left to go waste, and the poverty of the villagers increased. In some provinces, regulations have been enacted strictly prohibiting farmers from leaving their villages, but these prohibitory regulations do not work well, as they are tantamount to attempting to purify a stream which is muddy at the source."

3. POPULATION CONTROL

Another point worthy of special note in connection with the population question is that the evil practice of abortion and infanticide prevailed almost everywhere in the country in those days. The big cities of Edo, Kyoto and Osaka were no exceptions to the rule, though in Ohu provinces,

Kadzusa, Shimôsa, Kodzuke, Shimodzuke, Hidachi, Tosa, Kyushu provinces and other rural districts it was particularly rife. Either drugs were used or medical treatment was obtained to effect abortions, or new-born babies were stifled to death. This infanticide was called *mabiku*, or *kaesu* or *modosu* in those days. "Mabiku" means thinning. People of those days thought no more seriously of infanticide than of rooting out vegetables or herbs.

Sato-Nobuhiro says: "Many women become pregnant, but they can not nurse their children. They murder their babies or procure abortion. By travelling around our country, I know this custom prevails. It is a very terrible fact that in a village consisting of ten houses, every year over two babies are killed." "This custom is most prevalent in the provinces of Ohu and Kanto. In Chugoku, Shikoku and Kyushu abortion is universal. Even in the provinces of Dewa and Ohshu alone every year about sixteen or seventeen thousand babies are killed. But no one is startled by this deplorable custom."

In a memorial submitted by Ro-Tozan, of the Sendai clan, to the Shogunate authorities, the following remarks were made:—"Up to fifty or sixty years ago (about 1754) a couple of farmers used to bring up five or six or even seven or eight children, but in recent years it has become a fashion among the farmers not to rear more than one or two children between a couple, though it is not clear whether this is due to the luxurious habits that prevail among them or some other causes. As soon as a baby is born, its parents put it to death. All this is ascribable to their poverty. They prefer leading as best a life as they can without encumbrances to bringing up many children to hunger and penury, and restrict the number of their children to two or three. Even rich families are contaminated by this evil custom, and deliberately restrict the number of their children. In my opinion, the prevalence of this usage is partly responsible for the waste of agricultural fields." In the 4th year of Meiwa (1767) an official order was issued prohibiting such

evil practices. The official order said in part: "We understand that in some provinces farmers who have already many children put to death new-born babies immediately after their birth. This is a very inhuman act. Village officials must see that no such crime is committed in their villages, while farmers themselves should keep watch upon one another in order to prevent such crimes." In Kyushu, there was a custom to kill two out of five children born to their parents. In Tosa province, one boy and two girls were considered the maximum number of children to be brought up in one family. In some other districts, practically all the babies, whose births were reported to the local authorities, were boys. Hardly one out of every ten children reported was a girl. Again, in Hyuga province, only the first-born was allowed to live, all other babies being killed as soon as they were born. It was even thought better to buy children from traffickers in children popularly called *hitokai-bune*, who came to sell boys and girls whom they had kidnapped in Kyoto, Osaka and other places, as this could save them much of the trouble of bringing them up.

It seems that the *samurai* class in the provinces was not free from the above-mentioned custom. In the *Sobo Kigen*, Nakai-Chikuzan says:—"There are an exceedingly large number of poor people in the out-of-the-way districts who refuse to bring up their children. Indeed, this custom has become so widespread that people regard it as if it were a matter of course. This usage is specially noticeable in Hyuga province. I have often heard that this evil practice has spread even to the *samurai* class. If a baby is born in a *samurai* family, for instancc, the friends of the family make inquiries among themselves as to whether the baby is going to be brought up. They do not visit the family to congratulate the parents until they are sure that the newly born infant is going to be brought up. If they learn that it is not going to be of the living, they pretend to know nothing of the matter, and leave it severely alone. Most families do not take the trouble to bring up any except

the first-born. If any family chooses to bring up two or three children, it is held up to ridicule by others. This is simply outrageous."

In formulating its policy for dealing with this practice of population control, the Shogunate used a good deal of care. It vetoed the practice and punished the delinquents. This policy achieved some good results in some districts, but it apparently failed to meet with general success. It is also noticeable that some clans made earnest endeavours to stamp out the evil custom. As one example of this, let me describe the policy pursued by Lord Matsudaira· Rakuo for increasing the population. As already stated, the bad custom of abortion and infanticide prevailed in the Ohu and other districts, and the Shirakawa district was no exception to the rule. Lord Rakuo often issued instructions to the inhabitants in his fief dwelling upon the evil nature of the practice. In the fourth year of Temmei (1784), he laid down a rule that one bale of rice should be awarded to the couple who, in spite of their poverty, kept aloof from the evil custom and brought up more than five children. In the Shirakawa district, the male population was out of proportion larger than that of females in those days, and it was, in such circumstances, impossible for young men to marry women unless they were rich enough to make the parents of their future wives monetary gifts. This led to the decrease of births and the gradual dwindling of the population year after year, with the result that areas of waste farm fields increased every year. On the other hand, in Echigo province, which was Lord Rakuo's branch fief, the population was on the increase and women had industrious habits. Being informed of the fact that their adherence to the Ikko sect prevented the inhabitants of Echigo from committing infanticide, Lord Rakuo caused many women of that province to migrate to the Shirakawa district, supplying them with travelling expenses. They were, moreover, given a house and a tract of land, and helped to get husbands so that they could settle down to the cultivation of the soil and make it their

life work. Recognising also the fact that the prevalence of the custom of abortion and infanticide was due, after all, to poverty, the Daimyo made a new law in the second year of Kwansei (1790), under which a monetary grant except for the first-born, was made to each married couple to whom a child was born, towards the expenses, of its bringing up. It was also arranged that pregnant women should be officially registered, that births should be duly reported to the proper authorities and that the babies born should be officially inspected. Thanks to these measures, a capitation taken in the fourth year of Kwansei (1792) showed an increase of more than 3,500 in the population of his Shirakawa fief as compared with the fifth year of Temmei (1785). New farmers were also created and new farm villages formed brought into existence at Iizaka and other places, and a striking increase in the production of rice in many places. Besides the Shirakawa clan, the clans of Mito, Shonai, Tosa, Yonezawa, Sendai, Akita, Kagoshima, etc. devised various remedial measures for these various ills. In the writings of the scholars of those days we find frequent reference to the necessity of eradicating the evil custom by means of a grant of money for bringing up children, or by other means.

As another example, I will give the record of Tomita-mura in Kadzusa province. Tomita-mura was a village which produced some 1,382 koku of rice. About the Genroku era (1688—1703) it possessed 160 households on an average, with a population of about 1,000, but in the second year of Ansei (1855), the households were reduced to 112 in number while the population diminished to 517, showing a decrease of 48 in households and of 483 in population. The figures given of the births and deaths of infants in the fourth year of Ansei (1857) show that of the total of the children born in this year, numbering 26, thirteen grew up, while the rest died. The following classification gives further details:—

Births.	Heirs.		Others.	
	Brought up.	Died.	Brought up.	Died.
26	10	4	3	9

It will be seen from the above table that whereas in the case of heirs, the deaths represented about 30 per cent. of the total, the percentage of deaths was 75 in the case of the others, Referring to the four dead among the heirs, the recorder mentions that had the necessary instructions been given during the pregnancy of their mothers or medical treatment been given during the illness, two or three of them might have been saved. Again, with reference to the nine dead in the other lot of infants, he says that although he was told that three had died of various diseases, and six were either born dead or died of illness soon after they were born, it was difficult to ascertain whether it was really so. In these cases also, the recorder says, if strict injunctions had been given, seven or eight of them might have been saved. Regarding the three that were brought up, he says that it was on the earnest persuasions of many that their parents finally consented to bring them up. The above remarks clearly show that the practice of infanticide prevailed. The percentage of infanticide was comparatively small in the case of heirs, but it was very high in regard to other children. If it was only on the advice of many people that the parents of the three more fortunate childen decided to bring them up, it is obvious that it was rather exceptional that the babies who were not heirs should have been allowed to live. Things were greatly improved, however, in the fourth, fifth and sixth years of Ansei (1857, 1858 and 1859) and the first year of Manyen (1860), as can be seen from the following table:—

	Births.	Live.	Dead.	Percentage of the living.
1857	26	13	13	50
1858	26	17	9	63.3
1859	29	22	7	75.3
1860	31	23	8	74.1

From the above it will be seen that not only did the number of births increase but there was a considerable

increase in the number of children brought up. This betterment of the conditions was presumably due to the efforts of leading villagers, as can be gathered from the following remark appearing in the record:—"Humble and ignorant as I am, my constant advice to my fellow-villagers has gradually had its effect upon them, and they have come to bring up their children."

The causes of birth control in towns and in agricultural districts were not exactly the same. In urban districts, besides poverty, fornication, and adultery, fecundity, the coincidence of pregnancy in a mother and her daughter-in-law, and the selfishness of parents, were among the causes, while in agricultural districts, birth control was almost exclusively due to the difficulty of living, which prevented people from rearing many children.

4. ADDENDUM

As already mentioned,[1] the freedom of the farmers was drastically restricted in those days. They were treated as though they were tools for producing taxes, and were groaning under the heavy burdens put upon them. To make matters worse, bad crops or famines occurred at frequent intervals. In the meantime, there was a gradual levelling up of the standards of living, as the times progressed. These causes combined to make the life of the farming population particularly wretched. As farmers could not afford to meet death by starvation with folded arms, they chose to resort to this means or that in order to ward off their difficulty of living. A variety of means were adopted by them for this purpose, and among the negative methods adopted may be mentioned birth control, migration to big cities and setting up as tradesmen. Farmers' riots may be described as a positive means adopted by them to better their wretched mode of living. Thus, there was a steady inflow of the rural population into cities, on the one hand, and the general

[1] See my essay "The Agrarian Problem in the Tokugawa Shogunate i n Vol. 1, No. 2 of this Economic Review.

practice of infanticide, popularly called *mabiki*, on the other. The latter course naturally checked the increase of the population. Even those who remained in their native places did not necessarily pursue agrestic pursuits in earnest. and there were cases where farmers took to other occupations. The shortage of farm labour was the natural outcome of this state of things. These causes, combined with others, brought about the due waste of agricultural fields and the impoverishment of agricultural districts.

In the feudal system of the Tokugawa Shogunate, land formed the main factor in production and the farming population constituted the only productive class, the privileged class called *samurai* being supported by the farmers. The conditions of living among the farmers became so distressing in the middle period of the Tokugawa Shogunate and after, as has already been described, that they could not afford to support the *samurai* class. The result was that the maintenance of the feudal system was rendered very difficult.

Furthermore, commerce and industry gradually developed, and currency found general circulation. With the development of the urban districts, the commercial class came to exert greater influence, and currency economics gradually took the place of land economics, while commercial capital came into active play. In this way, the *samurai* class, which could no longer depend upon the old economic system for support, had to bow before the rising economic power, with the result that the commercial class came to wield predominant influence in social life.

In short, the various phases of economic change in the Tokugawa Shogunate indicate that the feudal system of those days was pre-destined to disintegration. The population problem, when considered in conjunction with the agrarian question, can be regarded as constituting an important factor in the collapse of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

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